(b) No, Sir.

(c) Question does not arise.

(d) Afforestation under Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Integrated Afforestation and Eco-Development Projects is carried out in the catchement areas of the feeding rivers flowing through Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

An area of 61880 hectares with a total cost of Rs.2535.85 lacs has been treated with suitable soil conservation measures for control of soil erosion, land degradation and control of sediment flow in Upper Yamuna Catchement area under Flood Prone Rivers scheme.

Guidelines have been issued to the State Governments to consider banning of all fellings above 1000 metres; to identify critical areas in the hills and mountains, areas prone to landslides, erosion and geologically unstable formations for providing protection from felling of forests and afforesting vigorously.

Clear felling if resorted to due to compelling reasons should be restricted to areas no exceeding 10 ha. in the hills and 25 ha. on the plains.

Joint Forest Management Systems are being developed with the involvement of village communities and voluntary agencies for protection and regeneration of forests through a mechanism of usufruct sharing basis.

Forest Conservation Act, 1980 has been enacted to prevent diversion of forest land for non-forestary purposes without prior permission of the Central Government.

Indian Forest Act, 1927 and wildlife protection Act, 1972 are enforced to check forest and wildlife offences.

[Translation]

Train Services From Bikaner

745. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH BHATI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to introduce direct trains from Bikaner to Madras, Dehradun, Jammu Tawi, Ajmer and Howrah (Calcutta);

(b) if so, the time by which these trains are likely to be introduced; and

(c) if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c). The feasibility of introduction of trains from Bikaner to other places is presently not feasible due to operational exigencies and resource constraints.

[English]

Construction of Overbridge

746. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a proposal for construction of an overbridge from Sewri Railway Station to Sewri Koliwara in Mumbai (Maharashtra); and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b). A number of representations have been received, such as from Balak Palak Shikshak Sangh, Koli Samaj Cooperative Housing Society Ltd., Shrimati Nirmala Samant Prabhavalkar, Shrimati Promila Dandavate & Shri Mohan Rawale, M.P., for provision of a foot over bridge for public to cross the tracks at Sewri Executive Engineer, Road Development and Design Division, Bombay proposed a fly over in lieu of level crossing 7-A on Harbour line.

Foot over bridges, which are not in lieu of level crossings can only be provided on 'Deposit' terms. As yet no proposal has been received from Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) or State Govt agreeing to bear the cost of Foot Over Bridge on 'Deposit' terms The proposal for Road Over Bridge could not be finalised by State Govt. as the proposal was not acceptable to Bombay Port Trust in whose land the approach falls.

Neem Plantation

747. SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI NAVIN CHANDRA MEHTA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any study has been conducted to find out the medicinal value of the Neem Tree;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken to encourage Neem Plantation and declare the same as national tree?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Various parts of neem plant reportedly have antihelminthic, antisyphilitic, antipyretic, antiseptic, astringent, diuretic and purgative actions and have also been used to treat boils, eye diseases, headaches, hepatitis, leprosy, reheumatism, scrofula and ulcers. In Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicine neem has been recommended for use against various ailments. Even British Doctors recommended its use in 19th century.

The antifertility potential of a neem extract is currently being investigated by the Scientists.